

Well, we find that right now home State training of National Guard units had to be suspended because of the supplemental not being funded, and deployment of all military units is going to have to be slowed.

In other words, there are people who are part of our Armed Forces who have been in Iraq, who have served their time, who are expecting to come home. Their time of coming home is going to be delayed because their replacement will not have the resources to get back into the fight.

The administration's position on the bill is that the war supplemental should remain focused on the needs of the troops and should not be used as a vehicle for adding on emergency spending, and also for policy proposals that I find are more destined to make a difference in the political fight than they are in the fight against the enemies of our country.

Mr. President, I conclude by reading a letter that was written by Army LTC Charles P. Ferry, regarding the death of his comrade, his fellow soldier, Army Ranger SSG Joshua Hager, a young man who died in the service of his country.

The lieutenant colonel wrote:

On February 22, 2007, the Scout Platoon and I were conducting a vehicle movement at night along a route we had traveled many times before. Joshua and the rest of the Scouts had every inch of this road memorized. About halfway to our destination, Joshua's vehicle was struck by a large, deeply buried improvised explosive device (IED). Joshua was instantly killed by the blast, and the two other Scouts in the vehicle were wounded.

The lieutenant colonel continues to write:

I have been in the Army for about 23 years and served in numerous Infantry, Special Forces, and Ranger Battalions. I have served about three years collectively in combat in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and Staff Sergeant Joshua Hager is one of the best Sergeants I have ever served with and I trusted my life with him. He was the consummate professional and the absolute standard bearer for his platoon. He died doing what he loved and what he was very good at and I was proud to serve with him. I hope and pray that our Nation will always appreciate the ultimate sacrifice he and his family have made. I will never forget Joshua and I carry his memory burned into my heart as we continue to fight in the city of Ramadi.

I have spoken with the father of Sergeant Hager. We talked a number of times about his son and his son's beliefs. I cannot imagine the pain Mr. Hager feels, but I can tell you what he did say to me. The message from Joshua's father that he wanted me to relay here was Joshua understood his mission. He understood what he was over there fighting for. He knew this was a war worth fighting, and worth winning.

Young Joshua Hager told his dad these things and added:

I'll stay in Iraq for another year or however long it takes to defeat the enemy—so that my son won't have to fight this battle when he grows up.

That statement, I believe, embodies the spirit of our soldiers in the field.

They get it. They know their mission. We should know ours as well. We ought to get to work. We ought to strip out of this bill the timelines that would constrain and tie the hands of our military commanders. We should strip the pork, the unnecessary, nonemergency, nonwar-related pork that is in the bill, and send a clean bill to the President that he might sign it and get the resources to the troops they so desperately need, not only in Iraq but just as well as back here at home as we continue to attempt to keep our National Guard properly trained and properly prepared.

This is a difficult issue. I know very much how much this issue can divide our country. But I also know how very important it is to those of us who I believe clearly understand the threat our country faces in the global war on terror, the issues that relate to the security of this Nation, and the very difficult situation we find ourselves in. We should not make this situation more difficult by injecting domestic politics into the atmosphere.

I do believe it is very important that we continue to fund the troops, that we give the troops our support and our backing, and we do so in a timely manner.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. LINCOLN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OBAMA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I know the Republican side has additional time remaining. That will be reserved for them. I wish to speak under the Democratic time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRAGEDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Virginia Tech community and the families comforting them. The entire Nation obviously is grieving with them over their tremendous loss. We want them to know that all of our States, particularly the great State of Arkansas, stand with them as they cope with this senseless tragedy. We will continue to be with them, keep them in our thoughts and prayers in the coming weeks and months.

I attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College just down the road from Blacksburg in Lynchburg, VA. I remember when I was in college, Virginia Tech was well known for its strong and passionate student body. They had tremendous strength. They had a strong will, a strong determination, and a strong and bright spirit. I certainly

know that all of those strengths remain in today's student body at Virginia Tech. I also know that their alumni will be there to comfort them and steady them well in the coming months. We hope they know we have them in our thoughts and prayers.

WAR IN IRAQ

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, news from the Pentagon last week hit so many families throughout our great State of Arkansas particularly hard. Four years into the conflict in Iraq, the Army National Guard put 13,000 reservists, including nearly 2,000 from the largest National Guard unit in Arkansas, the 39th Infantry Brigade, on notice that they should be prepared for a second deployment at the end of this year. The Pentagon's decision to potentially deploy these troops marks the first time during Operation Iraqi Freedom that full Guard units would be called up for a second tour of duty. Our Arkansas troops already have performed bravely in Iraq, and we know they will do so again.

Today, along with many Arkansans honorably serving in the Active-Duty military, over 1,600 of our citizen soldiers have been activated for service in the Middle East and along our southern border with Mexico. The 142nd Fire Brigade based in Fayetteville, AR, mobilized last week and is expected in Iraq this summer. Eighty members of the 213th Area Support Medical Company are preparing for their mobilization orders in June. Many of these members served in Iraq before with the 296th Ambulance Company. The headquarters company, the 871st Troop Command, is also expected to be mobilized in June.

Since the war began, our troops have performed their mission with incredible bravery and skill in some of the harshest conditions imaginable. Their families have supported them and kept them in their prayers, have been there with them each step of the way, both in the harsh conditions and when they have returned. Their communities have supported them, many of which are rural communities. They are communities that, when these soldiers have been deployed, have to find someone else to fill positions while they are gone, positions such as mayor or principal of the school, fire chief or police chief, small businesses that keep the economies in those small rural communities thriving.

Because of the sacrifice of these brave men and women, their families, and these communities, we have seen a popularly elected government replace a ruthless dictator.

We have seen a democratic constitution approved by the Iraqi people replace the authoritarian rule they had known. Tragically, we also have seen civilian mismanagement of this war which is not reflective of the tremendous sacrifice put forth by our men and women in uniform. Today, more than